

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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60

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-02 SSO-00 PA-01 PRS-01 INRE-00

USIE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 NSC-05

OES-06 OMB-01 NSCE-00 FAA-00 CG-00 DOTE-00 /047 W

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O R 220020Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4365

INFO DEA HQS WASHDC

CUSTOMS HQ WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 5098

S/NM FOR VANCE

ARA FOR LUERS

DEA FOR ADMINISTRATOR BENSINGER

CUSTOMS FOR COMM ACREE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, PFOR, MX

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE PUBLIC MEXICAN REACTION TO OPERATION

DIAMONDBACK

1. AS DEPARTMENT (S/NM) IS AWARE, SUBJECT OPERATION, UTILIZING THE COMBINED RESOURCES OF CUSTOMS SERVICE, BORDER PATROL, DEA, THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, AND THE COAST GUARD, WILL BEGIN APRIL 22 AN INTENSIFIED DAY AND NIGHT AIR, SEA, AND LAND INTERDICTION EFFORT FROM FALCON DAM TO THE SOUTHERN TIP OF PADRE ISLAND AND NORTH TO THE MANSFIELD AREA. THE OPERATION WILL LAST THIRTY DAYS AND IS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY A U.S.-BASED INTERDICTION EFFORT, INPUT FROM MEXICO BEING LIMITED TO CERTAIN INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION RELATING TO SEA AND AIR TRAFFIC ALONG THE MEXICAN GULF COAST.

2. ALTHOUGH THE INTERDICTION IS BY NO MEANS A BORDER SEALING OPERATION AND WILL AFFECT ONLY A SMALL STRETCH OF

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THE U.S.-MEXICAN BORDER, I THINK WE HAVE TO ANTICIPATE THAT

AS BORDER CROSSING LAND TRAFFIC IN PARTICULAR IS INEVITABLY SLOWED, THE PRESS, BOTH IN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO, WILL HAVE ITS ATTENTION ATTRACTED. ALTHOUGH BOTH MEXICAN CUSTOMS AND THE MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL HAVE BEEN BRIEFED (SEE DEA MEXICO 404), WE CANNOT ASSUME, IF AN ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION DEVELOPS HERE, THAT THE GOM WOULD NOT FEEL COMPELLED TO MAKE UNHELPFUL STATEMENTS. THUS THERE EXISTS SOME POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE REACTION HERE REMINISCENT OF THE UNHAPPY EXPERIENCE ACCOMPANYING OPERATION INTERCEPT OF OCTOBER 1969.

3. I WOULD LIKE TO BE ASSURED THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS ALERTING PARTICIPATING AGENCIES TO THIS POTENTIAL AND WORKING WITH THEM TO MINIMIZE THIS POSSIBILITY. THIS COULD INCLUDE CAREFULLY INSTRUCTING VARIOUS AGENCY PARTICIPANTS TO AVOID GIVING THE APPEARANCE THAT A "BORDER SEALING" OPERATION IS UNDERWAY AND TO REFRAIN FROM PUBLICIZING THE INTERDICTION SUCCESSES WHICH I TRUST WILL RESULT. ASSUMING THAT SOME NEWS RELEASES WILL INEVITABLY BE MADE, I WOULD HOPE THESE WOULD REFLECT FAVORABLY ON THE MXICAN ANTI-DRUG PROGRAM AS WELL AS OUR OWN AND CERTAINLY BE DESIGNED TO AVOID SUCH GRATUITOUS IRRITANTS AS MENTIONING SPECIFIC PERCENTAGE ESTIMATES OF MEXICAN BROWN HEROIN ENTERING THE U.S. I ASSUME THE DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED (PLEASE PROVIDE COPY) AND ASK THAT WE BE KEPT INFORMED OF THE OPERATION AS IT PROGRESSES.

THOMPSON

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